

## FACT SHEET

**SHIGELLA**

(Shigellosis/Bacillary dysentery)

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| <b><i>What is Shigella?</i></b>                  | Shigella is a bacteria that can infect the intestinal tract of children and adults. It is highly contagious.  |
| <b><i>How is it spread?</i></b>                  | Shigella is carried in the intestinal tract by the stool and spread to others by direct (person-to-person) or by indirect contact with the organism (contaminated food, water, etc.).   |
| <b><i>What is the incubation period?</i></b>     | Symptoms usually appear 24-72 hours after contact with the bacteria, and may occur up to 7 days after exposure.   |
| <b><i>What are the early signs?</i></b>          | Symptoms of Shigella vary, but may include any combination of the following symptoms: nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, bloody or watery diarrhea, and gas. Fever if present is usually high.   |
| <b><i>What about contacts?</i></b>               | Encourage extra care with handwashing and cleaning under nails. Children with symptoms should be sent home and seen by a physician.   |
| <b><i>How long is the person contagious?</i></b> | Shigella is contagious from the active stage of the illness until after symptoms subside. Recovery usually takes 2-4 days with antibiotic treatment. The bacteria may be excreted in the stool of an untreated person.  |
| <b><i>When is it OK to return to school?</i></b> | Children with active symptoms should remain at home until the symptoms have subsided, and two consecutive stool cultures are found to be free of Shigella. Good handwashing should be encouraged.   |
| <b><i>Other Important Information</i></b>        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At the first sign of illness: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Call your family doctor for instructions.</li> <li>2. Treatment with antibiotics, such as Septra or Ampicillin, is recommended to ensure the child is no longer infectious.</li> <li>3. Notify school/daycare that your child is ill, since the health department must be notified about reportable communicable diseases.</li> </ol> </li> <li>• Good hygiene controls the spread of disease; practice careful handwashing after using the bathroom and before eating/preparing food.</li> <li>• Children with diarrhea may become dehydrated easily; they may need to drink extra clear fluids.</li> </ul> |

*This fact sheet is not intended to replace the advice of your physician. Parents should contact their healthcare provider if they have concerns regarding their child's health. If you have general questions, you may contact a Kalamazoo County nurse at 373-5264 or 373-5267.*

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